

REMARKS

Applicant first wishes to thank Examiner Vaughan for permitting Applicant to conduct a telephonic interview on September 29, 2004. During that interview, Applicant and the Examiner discussed the 35 U.S.C. § 101 and § 103 rejections in the current Office Action. A tentative agreement was reached with respect to both of these rejections.

Regarding the § 101 rejection, Applicant has amended the preambles of claims 1 and 9 to recite a method for time-stamping a digital document. In light of this amendment, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the § 101 rejections to claims 1 and 9.

Regarding the § 103 rejection, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 9 under § 103(a) over the patent to Haber in view of the patent to Epstein. In the Office Action, the Examiner admits that Haber fails to teach or suggest inserting a linking value into first and second timestamp receipts, but asserted that the patent to Epstein does.

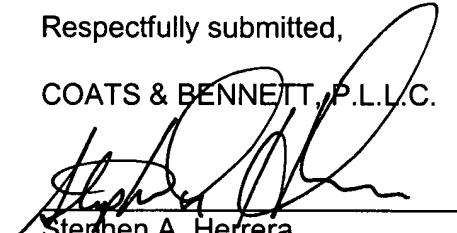
Epstein does not teach or suggest a linking value that links or couples two timestamp receipts. As clarified in amended claims 1 and 9, the linking value links a pair of timestamp receipts that are associated with a single document. In contrast, Epstein discloses that two different documents may be related to each other (i.e., one document may be a revision of an earlier document). However, Epstein never teaches or suggests that either one of these documents has first and second timestamp receipts, and further, never indicates that a linking value is inserted into first and second timestamp receipts. In fact, Epstein discloses just the opposite – *that each document has its own timestamp receipt*. According to Epstein, a first document has a timestamp that includes the author's signature, receipt time, notary id, sequence number, and customer id. *Epstein*, col. 3, ll. 15-18. A revised document (based on the original) has a separate timestamp that is generated using the same process and information similar to the information contained in the timestamp for the original. *Epstein*, col. 4, ll. 13-16. The reason Epstein teaches providing each document – related or not – with its own

timestamp is so that each document may be verified *independently* of the other. *Epstein*, col. 3, II. 22-26.

In light of these amendments and remarks, neither Haber nor Epstein teach or suggest, alone or in combination, either claim 1 or 9. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the allowance of all pending claims 1-19.

Respectfully submitted,

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